

SS-8 Determination—Determination for Public Inspection

Occupation
09DVC.148 Driver

Determination:
☒ Employee ☐ Contractor

UILC

Third Party Communication:
☒ None ☐ Yes

Facts of Case

The worker initiated the request for a determination of his work status; he performed bread delivery utilizing the firm's truck in tax year 2014. The firm's business is described as bread delivery.

The firm's response was signed by the firm's Vice President. The firm's business is described as a distributorship. The worker performed services as a delivery worker; he was responsible for loading and delivering product to stores.

According to the firm, the worker was provided with information about the stores the product was to be delivered to and a list of the stores on his route. The firm indicated the worker determined the methods to be used to perform the assignments and he was to perform the services personally. The firm responded that the worker could hire and pay substitutes, and the firm's approval was not necessary.

The worker acknowledged that the firm provided him with specific training and instructions as to the delivery route and locations and the job assignments. The worker indicated the firm determined the methods by which he performed his services and that any problems or complaints encountered by the worker were directed to the firm for resolution. His routine was to pick up the truck and product and make the specified deliveries. The worker stated he was required to perform the services personally; any additional personnel were hired and paid by the firm.

Both parties concurred that the firm provided the truck, gas, and product to be delivered. The worker provided a valid driver's license; he did not lease equipment and did not incur expenses in the performance of the job. The firm stated the worker was paid by the number of deliveries and days worked; however, the worker indicated he was paid a salary. The customers paid the firm. The firm stated the worker was covered under the firm's workers' compensation insurance policy and that the firm established the level of payment for services provided or products sold.

The firm and worker agreed that no benefits were extended to the worker and that either party could terminate the work relationship without incurring a liability or penalty. The firm responded that the worker was performing same or similar services for others during the same time frame; the worker disagreed. The firm stated the worker was a driver only and that any questions, concerns, problems, and/or ordering was done through the firm.

Analysis

A worker who is required to comply with another person's instructions about when, where, and how he or she is to work is ordinarily an employee. This control factor is present if the person or persons for whom the services are performed have the right to require compliance with instructions. Some employees may work without receiving instructions because they are highly proficient and conscientious workers or because the duties are so simple or familiar to them. Furthermore, the instructions, that show how to reach the desired results, may have been oral and given only once at the beginning of the relationship.

If the services must be rendered personally, presumably the person or persons for whom the services are performed are interested in the methods used to accomplish the work as well as in the results.

Payment by the hour, week, or month generally points to an employer-employee relationship, provided that this method of payment is not just a convenient way of paying a lump sum agreed upon as the cost of a job. In such instances, the firm assumes the hazard that the services of the worker will be proportionate to the regular payments. This action warrants the assumption that, to protect its investment, the firm has the right to direct and control the performance of the workers. Also, workers are assumed to be employees if they are guaranteed a minimum salary or are given a drawing account of a specified amount that need not be repaid when it exceeds earnings.

If the person or persons for whom the services are performed ordinarily pay the worker's business and/or traveling expenses, the worker is ordinarily an employee. An employer, to be able to control expenses, generally retains the right to regulate and direct the worker's business activities.

The fact that the person or persons for whom the services are performed furnish significant tools, materials, and other equipment tends to show the existence of an employer-employee relationship.

A person who can realize a profit or suffer a loss as a result of his or her services is generally an independent contractor, while the person who cannot is an employee. "Profit or loss" implies the use of capital by a person in an independent business of his or her own. The risk that a worker will not receive payment for his or her services, however, is common to both independent contractors and employees and, thus, does not constitute a sufficient economic risk to support treatment as an independent contractor. If a worker loses payment from the firm's customer for poor work, the firm shares the risk of such loss. Control of the firm over the worker would be necessary in order to reduce the risk of financial loss to the firm. The opportunity for higher earnings or of gain or loss from a commission arrangement is not considered profit or loss.

We have considered the information provided by both parties and have applied the above law to this work relationship. In this case, the firm retained the right to change the worker's methods and to direct the worker to the extent necessary to protect its financial investment and business reputation and to ensure its customers' satisfaction and that its contractual obligations were met. The worker was not operating a separate and distinct business; the worker did not invest capital or assume business risks, and therefore, did not have the opportunity to realize a profit or incur a loss as a result of the services provided. Integration of the worker's services into the business operations generally shows that the worker is subject to direction and control. When the success or continuation of a business depends to an appreciable degree upon the performance of certain services, the workers who perform those services must necessarily be subject to a certain amount of control by the owner of the business. In this case, the worker was not engaged in an independent enterprise, but rather the services performed by the worker were a necessary and integral part of the firm's business.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above analysis, we conclude that the firm had the right to exercise direction and control over the worker to the degree necessary to establish that the worker was a common law employee, and not an independent contractor operating a trade or business.